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The New Zealand Herald

# Weekend Herald

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WEEKEND HERALD EXCLUSIVE

# 'Innocent man' in jail 20 years

by Phil Taylor  
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Confessions of man convicted over brutal killing are false, say investigators

An innocent man has spent almost 20 years in jail for one of New Zealand's most notorious cases of rape and murder, says a detective with expert knowledge of the crime.

Susan Burdett was brutally raped and murdered in her Papatoetoe home in 1992 after an evening out 10-pin bowling.

The 39-year-old accounts clerk, who lived alone, was bashed repeatedly on the head with a softball bat that she kept in her bedroom for protection.

A colleague found her naked body on her bed after she failed to turn up for work the next day.

The case horrified the public and baffled police, who had no firm leads for almost a year.

Eventually, a 17-year-old gang associate, Teina Pora, was arrested and convicted of the crime in 1994 after making inconsistent confessions.

But in 1996, DNA testing showed the semen inside Mrs Burdett belonged to serial rapist Malcolm Rewa, who was unknown at the time of Pora's trial but was convicted in 1998 of sexually assaulting 24 women.

Now the detective whose expert testimony convicted Rewa says he is convinced police got the wrong man for Mrs Burdett's murder.

"It's one that has stuck in the craw," Dave Henwood told the *Weekend Herald* this week. "There's no doubts in my mind."

Mr Henwood, a multi-award-winning criminal profiler who also helped catch South Auckland serial

### Inside story

#### The Susan Burdett case: 15 questions

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Teina Pora



Malcolm Rewa

rapist Joseph Thompson, said that, in his opinion, Rewa committed the crime alone and Pora was innocent.

Rewa was tried twice for Mrs Burdett's rape and murder.

The jury at his first trial, which covered multiple sex attacks during the 1980s and 1990s, could not reach a verdict on the Burdett charges.

A second jury convicted Rewa of rape but could not decide on the murder charge.

Pora was convicted again in 2000 after a retrial was ordered.

Mr Henwood said the murder charge against Rewa failed only because Pora had already been wrongly convicted.

"You've got a joker [Rewa] who is not convicted of murdering Susan Burdett who did murder her," he said, "and the reason he is not convicted of it is because Pora is in the road."

His comments come soon after barrister Jonathan Krebs, a former Crown prosecutor, filed an application on Pora's behalf for the Royal Prerogative of Mercy, under which the Governor-General can order a new trial.

The *Weekend Herald* has also learned that an internationally renowned authority on suggestibility

and false confessions, Gisli Gudjonsson, recently reviewed nine hours of videotaped interviews Pora gave police and visited him in prison.

Dr Gudjonsson, professor of forensic psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London, conducted pioneering research into how people might be induced to make "confessions" to crimes they hadn't committed.

His testimony is credited with leading to the overturning of the convictions of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four – two groups of people wrongly accused of terror bombings in Britain.

Mr Krebs, who is convener of the New Zealand Law Society's criminal law committee, this week said he did not want to comment publicly.

He has previously said admissions Pora made were "false confessions" and he was confident his innocence could be proven.

The official police view is that up to four people were involved in Mrs Burdett's death.

This is based on Pora's original claim that two Mongrel Mob gang members he named were responsible.

But both men were cleared by alibi and DNA evidence.

The theory also clashes with the police case that convicted Rewa of the attacks on the 24 other women – that he was a habitual lone serial rapist.

Mr Henwood, who retired five years ago as a detective but continues to work for the police as an unsworn officer, said he knew there were issues about Pora's confessions and about identification but he purposely avoided looking at them.

"My view stands solely on the behaviour of Malcolm Rewa and I drew my conclusions from that."

It wasn't plausible that a 40-year-old who was third in command of the Highway 61 gang and who was otherwise always alone when he attacked women would take a 16-year-old associate of arch-rival gang the Mongrel Mob along to watch him rape.

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Susan Burdett was found raped and bashed to death in her Papatoetoe home after a night out 10-pin bowling.

## Paper of the Year — again

The *Weekend Herald* is Newspaper of the Year – again.

And [nzherald.co.nz](http://nzherald.co.nz) has been named as best website for the fourth time in five years.

These were two of the high points of an impressive performance at the Canon Media Awards last night for *New Zealand Herald* titles, including 12 wins – about a third of the total in the newspaper categories – plus four for [nzherald.co.nz](http://nzherald.co.nz).

The *Weekend Herald's* winning entry included coverage of the Christchurch earthquake, the Rugby World Cup and numerous exclusive stories including the shabby treatment of veterans going to commemorate the Battle of Crete and top law enforcement officials drinking the champagne of a man they were prosecuting.

The paper's aim was to be compelling, readable and brightly packaged with a relaxed weekend feel at the same time as it tackled the serious issues of our time through investigations and in-depth journalism.

It also explored the exciting new possibilities of story-telling and conveying information on digital platforms.

As well as being best paper overall this year, it was judged best weekly for the second year in a row, and *canvas* magazine was best newspaper-inserted magazine, also for the second year in a row.

The judges saw the *Weekend*

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